

Disclosure

of things evolutionists don't want you to know

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THE OLDEST SPONGE

Is the newest fossil sponge really the oldest?

This essay was inspired by a recent article in the prestigious peer-reviewed scientific journal, *Nature*, about the discovery of a fossil sponge they claim to be about 890 million years old.¹

Before we report on the discovery, have you ever noticed that the newest fossil is almost always the oldest? There are two reasons for this. Do you know what they are? Please ponder that for a moment before we tell you about the newest fossil discovery which, of course, is the oldest.

While you are thinking about that, let's lay the foundation for those two reasons by examining the difference between engineers and scientists. The difference is relevant to the answer.

ENGINEERS VS. SCIENTISTS

Evolutionists sometimes try to discredit me with a personal attack. They say I am an engineer, not a scientist. It is true there is a difference between a scientist and an engineer; but the false implication is that scientists are smarter because scientists typically have PhD degrees, but engineers rarely do.

In my defense, I say that the difference between engineers and scientists is not the number of years of indoctrination. The difference is actually the difference between new and old. **Engineers invent new things. Scientists invent stories about old things.**

Successful engineers build new things which do something better than whatever they replace. "The proof is in the pudding," as the old saying

¹ Elizabeth C. Turner, *Nature*, 28 July 2021, "Possible poriferan body fossils in early Neoproterozoic microbial reefs",
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-021-03773-z>

goes. **If an engineer's new idea works in practice, it is proved to be right.**

Successful scientists write stories which get published. They can't prove their stories about how stars and galaxies formed, how climate will change, or how life began and evolved—but that doesn't matter. **If a scientist's story is convincing enough to refute an old story, and leads to another grant for further research which will refute other old stories, that's all that matters.**

That brings us back to the two reasons why the newest fossil is almost always the oldest (or sometimes the youngest).

THE FIRST REASON

The first reason why nearly every fossil discovery is the oldest ever found is the need for publication. **No journal would publish a story saying that the sun rose on time, yet again, yesterday morning—but a story saying the sun rose earlier or later than expected** (and the remarkable reason why the sunrise time changed) **would get published.** The government has a limited amount of money to give to scientists, and that **money is given only to the scientists who write stories that get published** (providing, of course, the story advances The Inner Party's political agenda). Yes, that statement is cynical—but it is true.

Stories which confirm something known to be true aren't news. **Stories which contradict an earlier belief get published.** Prove it to yourself. Pick up any scholarly journal and open to an article at random. It will say that something previously believed is wrong, and that more money is needed for further research. **Opinions can (and do) change frequently. The truth never does.**

On the other hand, if you read an engineering

trade magazine, like the ones I used to write for,² you won't find articles that contradict an earlier one. A modern article about steam engines won't say that 19th century steam engines didn't work. The modern article will tell what we learned from those 19th century steam engines, and how they led to modern technology which makes them work even better. Truth is progressive—that is, new truths are built on the foundations of old truths. **The old truths are still true. The new truths expand upon what was already known.**

You can be sure the articles in engineering magazines are true because they can be confirmed experimentally. For example, you could prove or disprove our hypothetical article by building a steam engine using the new design to see if it out-performs a steam engine built using the old design or not. Furthermore, old steam engines will still work the way they always worked, regardless of whether or not the new design works better. The old steam engine doesn't have to be discredited to get the new steam engine accepted.

The articles in 20th century peer-reviewed professional science journals said that the 19th century "truth" about *Tyrannosaurus rex* was wrong. The 19th century "truth" was that *T. rex* was a reptile with scales. The 20th century truth was that they were feathered birds. Now, the 21st century truth is that they had scales.³

That's because the old "truth" was just speculation—and the new "truth" is speculation, too. There is no experimental confirmation, there is just a consensus of opinion. **Real science depends upon observation and experimentation—not consensus.**

So, the first reason why articles about **fossil discoveries** are always older (or younger, or bigger, or smaller) than previously "known" is that they **won't be published if they aren't.**

THE SECOND REASON

The second reason why evolution articles always contradict old ones is because the old articles are always wrong. Life did not originate spontaneously from non-life, and then diversify into all other forms of life. Since that didn't happen, every explanation of how it did happen is false. The theory of evolution violates known natural laws, and depends upon imaginary unknown natural laws.

² Do-While Jones' Home Page, <http://scienceagainstevolution.info/dwj/index.htm>

³ Bell, *et al.*, The Royal Society, 7 June 2017, "Tyrannosauroid integument reveals conflicting patterns of gigantism and feather evolution", <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2017.0092>

Since all the previous articles about evolution are false, sooner or later they will be proved to be false. **New articles generally begin by saying that previous beliefs about evolution are false**, which opens the door to the new wrong idea. The theory of evolution is "the gift that keeps on giving" (grants for further research).

The recent peer-reviewed article in the prestigious journal, *Nature*, about the oldest fossilized sponge is simply one of countless articles which prove our point. Let's look at it.

THE NATURE INTRODUCTION

The editors of *Nature* don't comment on every article—but they do give short introductions to the most important articles in that week's journal. They wrote an introduction for Turner's fossil sponge article, so they must have considered it to be important.

You probably think that some scientists would be skeptical about Turner's claim to have found the oldest fossil sponge—and you (since you are far above average intelligence) are right. The editors of *Nature* said,

Fossil discovered in northwestern Canada could rewrite the early history of animal life — but **some palaeontologists are not convinced** it's real.

Most major groups of animals — including arthropods, molluscs and worms — first appear in the fossil record during the Cambrian explosion, 541 million years ago. But according to a paper published today in *Nature*, sponge fossils from northwestern Canada could be 350 million years older, **significantly pushing back the date of Earth's earliest-known animals.**

The ancient discovery is igniting debate among palaeontologists, who have long contested when **complex animal life first evolved.**⁴

They summarized Turner's work by saying,

When Turner examined slices of the rock under a microscope, she saw branching networks of crystalline tubes. She later realized that **these structures resemble the internal scaffolding of modern horny sponges**, and line up with the expected decay and fossilization patterns of spongin, a collagen protein that forms their scaffolding.⁵

If simple resemblance doesn't seem convincing to you, you are not alone in your

⁴ Max Kozlov, *Nature*, 28 July 2021, "Sponge-like fossil could be Earth's earliest known animal", <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02066-9>

⁵ *ibid.*

skepticism.

Some scientists, however, are not convinced that the microscopic patterns in Turner's 890-million-year-old fossils indicate an ancient sponge, given the evidence provided in the study.

"It's such a big claim that you really have to eliminate all the other possibilities," says Rachel Wood, a geoscientist at the University of Edinburgh, UK, who researches fossil reefs. "Microbes, for example, produce weird and wonderful shapes and forms." Sometimes crystals also grow in a way that looks like patterns formed by living organisms, she says, meaning that the rock samples Turner found might not be fossils at all.⁶

If you attended public school in America, you were told that the story of early animal evolution is a well-known fact. You were lied to.

If Turner's structures do prove to be sponge fossils, says David Gold, a geobiologist at the University of California, Davis, "it would be very exciting, and help us nail down the early story of animal evolution", a subject that has been hotly debated for decades.

But although "it's easy to find things that look like sponges in the fossil record", he says, it's more difficult to back them up with other evidence. He and other researchers, for instance, have supported fossil claims by pointing to rock samples containing traces of biological molecules that are linked to sponges. Unfortunately, given the sheer age and type of Turner's rock samples, this type of preservation isn't really possible, he adds.⁷

... sponges could have pre-dated the Cambrian explosion, says Phoebe Cohen, a geobiologist at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Scientists estimate how long ago the ancestors of groups of living animals diverged using 'molecular clocks', which measure the rate of mutation in DNA and proteins over time.

The majority of these estimates suggest that the last common ancestor of all animals alive today evolved before the Cambrian explosion, but not by as much as 350 million years, says Cohen. Nevertheless, she says she could be convinced that Turner's samples are sponge fossils if she saw more evidence, including studies on how horny sponges fossilize.⁸

Do molecular clocks measure time or estimate time? If they measure time accurately, why don't

they all tell the same time? They must be unreliable estimates. Why would one believe the majority of unreliable estimates?

Cohen said she needs more evidence than superficial similarity and an unreliable estimate of age—and you should, too.

Molecular-clock estimates

The palaeontological community is split on whether the dearth of animal fossils from before the Cambrian period is because the creatures that lived then rarely survived as fossils to the present day, or because molecular-clock estimates of animal origins are wrong. Gold is convinced there were sponges before the Cambrian, but says that exactly how far back is a big, unresolved question.⁹

Why would there be a big, unresolved question about the ages of fossil sponges? The article doesn't say, but we know the answer. The age of the rock (as determined by a bogus geological technique) doesn't agree with the age of the fossil (as determined by the bogus molecular clock).

BATTLING FANTASIES

Evolutionists have invented crazy stories about what Earth must have been like hundreds of millions of years ago because they can't reconcile their discoveries with conditions on Earth today. One of the few things evolutionists agree upon is the fact that life could not have originated through any natural process in the presence of oxygen. Therefore, abiogenesis must have happened before there was much oxygen in the atmosphere. But the atmosphere is 20% oxygen now, so how did that happen? They don't know, so they invent stories like "snowball Earth."

As the poet said,

I'd rather have my facts all wrong
Than have no facts whatever.¹⁰

Gold and Turner both believe the wrong fact that Earth's atmosphere was originally oxygen-deprived. Gold doubts sponges could have survived in the mythical low levels of oxygen 890 million years ago; but Turner imagines a snotty way they could.

If the ancestors of modern sponges really were alive 890 million years ago, then it means early animals survived through very trying conditions for life, such as extremely low levels of oxygen and 'snowball Earth' periods during which the surface of the planet almost entirely froze over, says Gold.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Ogden Nash, 1931, *Bed Riddance*, "Who Did Which? Or, Who Indeed"

Turner argues that sponges could have survived the low-oxygen environment by eking out a living in cavities and crevices in the microbial reef next to photosynthetic cyanobacteria, which release oxygen. The sponges might also have been nourished by organic ooze that the bacteria produced. “There was probably a delicious and very copious supply of ‘snot’ for these filter-feeding organisms to have eaten,” she says.¹¹

Except for the humorous Ogden Nash quote, all the previous quotes came from the introduction to Turner’s article written by Max Kozlov, one of *Nature*’s editors. Let’s turn now to what Turner’s article itself said.

TURNER’S ARTICLE

Here is the abstract of that article:

Abstract

Molecular phylogeny indicates that metazoans (animals) emerged early in the Neoproterozoic era, but physical evidence is lacking. The search for animal fossils from the Proterozoic eon is hampered by uncertainty about what physical characteristics to expect. ... This Article presents petrographically identical vermiform microstructure from approximately 890-million-year-old reefs. ... If vermiform microstructure is in fact the fossilized tissue of keratose sponges, the material described here would represent the oldest body-fossil evidence of animals known to date, and would provide the first physical evidence that animals emerged before the Neoproterozoic oxygenation event and survived through the glacial episodes of the Cryogenian period.¹²

Real science depends upon observation and experimental evidence. The article admits there is no evidence that animals emerged early in the mythical Neoproterozoic era. That’s why the report is uncertain, and only possibly true (in Turner’s opinion). Simply put, the article is simply speculation, not science. The speculation depends upon unverifiable assumptions that the reefs where the fossils were found are 890 million years old, and that the descendants of these sponges could have survived the mythical “Neoproterozoic oxygenation event” and mythical “Cryogenian period.”

¹¹ Max Kozlov, *Nature*, 28 July 2021, “Sponge-like fossil could be Earth’s earliest known animal”, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02066-9>

¹² Elizabeth C. Turner, *Nature*, 28 July 2021, “Possible poriferan body fossils in early Neoproterozoic microbial reefs”, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-021-03773-z>

The article begins,

Main

Benthic microbial structures (stromatolites and other microbialites) provide conspicuous evidence of pre-Phanerozoic life, but are difficult to understand because they rarely preserve recognizable evidence of the organisms involved. Stromatolitologists have struggled for over a century to decipher their microscopic laminae and clots, which are assumed to have been produced or influenced by in vivo and/or post-mortem biogeochemical activity, and to formalize the ‘taxonomy’ of their morphology and microstructure.¹³

The Science Direct website says,

Stromatolites are trace fossils that record the interaction between microbial communities and sediments.¹⁴

We think the definition would be more accurate if it said, “Stromatolites are trace fossils that allegedly record the interaction between microbial communities and sediments.” Stromatolites are patterns in sedimentary rock which seem to (that is, might) have been caused by biological activity.

“Stromatolitologists have struggled for over a century” because the evidence is rarely recognizable. They believe the fossils are the result of biological activity; but that could just be a manifestation of the axiom, “I would not have seen it if I didn’t believe it.”

The bulk of Turner’s article uses lots of big words to say that she looked at some rocks under a microscope and she saw,

The shape, size, branching style and polygonal meshworks of the Little Dal vermiform tubules closely resemble both spongin fibre networks of modern keratosan sponges (Fig. 2a-c) and vermiform microstructure either demonstrated or interpreted to be sponge-derived in diverse Phanerozoic microbial, reefal and non-reefal carbonate rocks.¹⁵

As the saying goes, “If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it must be a duck.” But, if a cloud looks like a dog, that doesn’t make it a dog. If a rock looks like a sponge, that doesn’t make the rock a sponge.

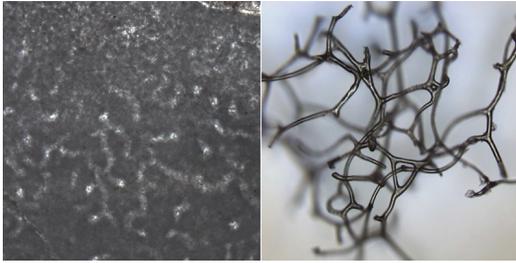
¹³ *ibid.*

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<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780444529497501480>

¹⁵ Elizabeth C. Turner, *Nature*, 28 July 2021, “Possible poriferan body fossils in early Neoproterozoic microbial reefs”, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-021-03773-z>

Judge Turner's evidence for yourself.



Crystalline tubes seen in rocks (left) might have been formed when the collagen-like skeleton of an 890-million-year-old sponge decayed and fossilized. Some modern sponges have internal scaffolding (right) that resembles the shapes in the rocks. Credit: Elizabeth C. Turner¹⁶

Does the rock on the left look like the sponge on the right? If so, does that prove to you that it is a sponge? Is that all the proof you need?

When it comes right down to it, every evolutionist's argument is simply, "They look enough alike that they could have shared a common ancestor." That's not science.

In this case, Turner found a rock that some people think (but don't know for sure) is 890 million years old. The rock looks like it might be a fossilized sponge, so she thinks it is evidence that sponges existed 890 million years ago.

The rock also looks like fossilized spaghetti; but Turner doesn't think it is evidence that people ate spaghetti 890 million years ago. Why believe it could be a fossilized sponge and not fossilized spaghetti? That's not a rhetorical question. It is a real question. Here is the real answer: She believes that sponges existed 890 million years ago, but doesn't believe people ate spaghetti 890 million years ago. Both hypotheses are possible—but the sponge hypothesis confirms her prejudice; the spaghetti hypothesis doesn't.

A superficial similarity isn't scientific evidence of evolution. Images can be deceiving.

A disturbingly large portion of papers—about 2%—contain "problematic" scientific images that experts readily identified as deliberately manipulated, according to a study of 20,000 papers published in *mBio* in 2016 by Elisabeth Bik of Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, and colleagues.¹⁷

Elisabeth Bik, a scientific integrity consultant who specializes in detecting image

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Jeffrey Brainard, *Science*, 26 Oct 2018, "Rethinking retractions", <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/362/6413/390>

manipulation in biomedical research papers, is not surprised by the survey's estimated prevalence of fraud. On average, she has found image manipulation in 4% of papers she examined. "But most manipulation cannot be detected," she says. "What we see is the tip of the iceberg. It's probably between 5% and 10%, which is close to the 8% misconduct in this survey."¹⁸

QUESTIONABLE RESEARCH

According to the professional literature,

More than half of Dutch scientists regularly engage in questionable research practices, according to new study results that are likely to apply to other countries. And one in 12 admitted to committing a more serious form of research misconduct within the past 3 years: fabrication or falsification of research results. At 8%, that is more than double the rate reported in previous studies.¹⁹

About half of all retractions do appear to have involved fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism—behaviors that fall within the U.S. government's definition of scientific misconduct. Behaviors widely understood within science to be dishonest and unethical, but which fall outside the U.S. misconduct definition, seem to account for another 10%. Those behaviors include forged authorship, fake peer reviews, and failure to obtain approval from institutional review boards for research on human subjects or animals.²⁰

We don't doubt science; and you should not doubt science, either—but much of what you have been told is not real science. The theory of evolution is philosophy, not science. Science is against evolution.

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<p>All back issues are on-line at ScienceAgainstEvolution.info.</p>	

¹⁸ Jop de Vrieze, *Science*, 16 July 2021, "Large survey finds questionable research practices are common", <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/373/6552/265>

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ See footnote 17.